

ABSTRACT

The present invention overcomes the shortcomings of the foregoing prior art devices and meets the foregoing needs by providing an apparatus and method for accurately sealing a multi-purpose reclosable zipper strip to a web of flexible film in an airtight manner. Moreover, the inventive apparatus and method is capable of repeatedly performing the steps necessary to seal tape to web with high throughput and with low cycle times. Generally, the apparatus and method utilizes a zipper tape having airtight splotch seals fused in series along desired lengths of the zipper tape. The zipper tape is dispensed through a feeding mechanism and, when an optical sensor detects one of the splotch seal portions of the zipper tape, a desired length of zipper tape is advanced over an elevator platform. A knife is then signaled to descend and sever the advanced portion of zipper tape, which is thus deposited onto the elevator platform. As the selected portion of the zipper tape is being positioned and deposited onto the elevator, the web is being positioned above the platform. A sealing head is then positioned over the web, while at the same time the elevator platform is driven upwardly so that the zipper tape portion positioned thereon comes into contact with the web. The heat passing through the web from the sealing head is sufficient to seal the peripheral portions of the zipper tape section to the web, thereby creating an airtight seal between the zipper tape portion and the web.

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